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SUBJECT: COALITION SUPPORT FOR RRT ERBIL

¶1. (SBU) This is an action request. Post requests that the Department issue instructions to deliver the points in paragraph six to the government of South Korea both in Washington and in Seoul on the establishment of a Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) in Erbil, Iraq.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (SBU) Building the capacity of the Iraqi provincial governments is a critical step in ensuring the continued development of a decentralized and democratic government that is transparent and responsive to the needs of its citizens. The melding of Coalition military and civilian assets is crucial in expediting Iraqi transition to self-reliance and is necessary to support a robust engagement at the provincial level. It is most effective to have established teams in place and ready to engage as soon as possible when the new provincial governments are seated. This will enable assistance during the critical formative stages and help ensure long-term success. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and Regional Reconstruction Teams assist Iraqi provincial governments to develop a transparent and sustained capability to govern, improve security and promote the rule of law, promote political and economic development, and provide the provincial administration skills necessary to meet the basic needs of the population. The PRT/RRT initiative is flexible and facilitates integration of development and reconstruction activities in a province. Eight PRTs and four RRTs (including Erbil) are planned, with the possibility that Coalition partners may choose to establish additional teams in their areas of responsibility. Four PRTs are currently operating, with one additional US-led and one Coalition-led PRT scheduled to open officially in April.

¶3. (SBU) The Republic of Korea (ROK) Civil-Military Operations (CMO) forces in the Kurdish region operate under the direction of the Civil Military Coordination Center (CIMIC) located at Camp Zaytun. They have focused on building friendships, Iraqi Security Force (ISF) development, humanitarian assistance programs and infrastructure development. In addition, the CIMIC operates a vocational training center near Erbil to provide courses in driving, machinery repair, and computer skills. The Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) funds major infrastructure projects, including sewage and water upgrades, within the Kurdistan Region provinces of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dahuk. KOICA also maintains a grant aid and technical

cooperation program to provide assistance aimed at building the skills of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) government officials and promoting economic development.

¶4. (SBU) The Koreans have a strong foundation of civil-military operations and mature relationships within the Kurdistan Region from which to facilitate the rapid establishment and integration of a RRT. The ROK has performed excellent work in reconstruction and development in the region and has achieved tangible progress towards enhancing stability and improving the welfare of the Kurdistan citizens. The Koreans also have significant PRT experience gained in Afghanistan.

¶5. (SBU) The U.S. goal is to maximize overall Coalition partner support and encourage the ROK to lead an RRT in Erbil, while ensuring we have maximum flexibility on security-related issues. On March 20, the National Coordination Team (NCT) Deputy Director met with the ROK in Erbil. The Koreans expressed strong interest in supporting an RRT; however, they also stressed that they must wait on a final decision from their national government. Post, to date, has not received notification of a decision from Seoul.

TALKING POINTS

¶6. (SBU) Begin talking points.

-- The Government of Korea has a strong foundation of civil-military operations and mature relationships

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within the Kurdistan Region from which to facilitate the rapid establishment and integration of a Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT).

-- Your government has performed excellent work in reconstruction and development in the region and has achieved tangible progress towards enhancing stability and improving the welfare of the Kurdistan citizens. You also have significant PRT experience from Afghanistan.

-- The USG requests the Republic of Korea to consider participation in the PRT initiative as a full partner by hosting and supporting an RRT in Erbil for the Kurdistan Region.

-- The USG encourages the Government of Korea to make a decision quickly to move ahead with the establishment of an RRT and provide the necessary work and housing space at Camp Zaytun. Space could be in already established Korean facilities or, if not available, we request an area be designated for the RRT where the USG could pursue options of placing trailers until the USAID compound on Camp Zaytun is completed in late July or August.

-- The USG invites the Government of Korea to assume the lead for the RRT by providing a civilian team leader if it so desires, a military co-deputy team leader (the US would also provide a co-deputy), a KOICA representative, a civil affairs group, and force protection personnel. If you opt not to appoint a civilian team leader, the USG is prepared to do so.

-- The US would provide a Department of State/USAID officer, an IRMO Provincial Project Manager, an Iraq Provincial Action Officer (IPAO), a Rule of Law Coordinator, local governance contractors, and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) engineer for each Kurdish province.

-- The USG believes an RRT in Erbil is necessary to maintain a close engagement with Kurdistan government officials and to assist with developing the capacity of the regional government. Your government is in the best position to do this due to your experience and established ties.

-- The USG believes Korean involvement in the RRT could provide additional private sector development and commercial enterprise opportunities for the ROK throughout the Kurdistan Region.

END TALKING POINTS.

CONCLUSION

¶7. (SBU) Post requests that the Department consider instructing a demarche to the government of the Republic of Korea at the earliest possible date. We believe the ROK PRT experience in Afghanistan and their outstanding working relationship in Erbil with KRG officials would provide a solid foundation upon which the RRT could continue to build. The Koreans' expertise, support, and leadership are critical to reaching our mutual goal of building a durable democracy in Iraq.

KHALILZAD